

## *Neighborly Notes for Students*



### **PRESIDENT COOLIDGE (1923-1929)**

When President Calvin Coolidge steamed into Havana harbor on a U.S. battleship, Latin American delegates to the Sixth Pan American Conference in 1928 were incensed. Coolidge was criticized widely by other delegates to the conference for his interventionist policies in Nicaragua. The battleship seemed to signal that for the United States it would be “business as usual.”

But patient diplomacy, under the guidance of two able diplomats—Secretary of State Stimson and former Secretary Hughes improved diplomatic relations with both Nicaragua and Mexico. Former Secretary Hughes restored calm after a heated debate on these words: “No state has the right to intervene in the internal affairs of another,” by offering a defense of “interposition” as only a temporary situation.



### **PRESIDENT HOOVER (1929-1933)**

Herbert Hoover was the first to use the phrase, “Good Neighbor.” He was on a seven-week diplomatic goodwill mission, visiting more than half of Latin American republics after his election as President in 1928 but before his inauguration in 1929. Hoover gave a speech in Honduras saying, “We have a desire to maintain not only the cordial relations of governments with each other, but

also the relations of good neighbors.” Reaction to his speech was, according to diplomatic historian Thomas A Bailey, “spotty.” But some good will did ensue. Repeated use of the concept and slogan proved successful.



### **PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT (1933-1945)**

Franklin Roosevelt popularized the Good Neighbor concept. In his first inaugural address he said: “In the field of world policy I would dedicate this nation to the policy of the good neighbor—the neighbor who resolutely respects himself and, because he does so, respects the rights of others—the neighbor who respects his obligations and respects the sanctity of his agreements in and with a world of neighbors.”

Secretary of State Hull helped tremendously at the 1933 Pan American Conference in Montevideo, Uruguay. This time he supported the phrase that had caused such controversy in 1928. U.S. troops were pulled out of Latin America until the 1960s.

FDR called a special meeting of American states in 1936 to discuss the worsening situation in Europe. He traveled to Buenos Aires by sea and

was well received. His opening speech transformed the Monroe Doctrine into a multilateral policy. From now on, all the American states would resist incursions. Secretary Hull reinforced FDR’s message.

Delegates approved a declaration of solidarity that provided for consultation in “the face of danger” but did not say how that would occur. On Christmas Eve, 1938 at the eighth annual meeting in Lima, Peru, the Declaration of Lima was approved, sparked by concern about aggression by European dictators. This document clarified the consultation mechanism and declared that the foreign ministers of all would gather at the call of one. That first meeting was held less than one year later in September 1939.